

Arm. *erkir*

VLADIMIR ORĚL

Institute for Slavic and Balkan Studies
Moscow

It is generally accepted now that Arm. *erkir* 'earth' (as well as *erkin* 'sky') are etymologically connected with *erku* 'two' and, thus, may be treated as derivatives of PIE **duō* 'two' (cf., a recent discussion of the problem in Ivanov 1969, 48; for the earlier etymologies see Ad-jarian 1973, s.v. *erkin*). We may as well reconstruct the corresponding etymons as **dueiro-* (> *erkir*) and **dueino-* (> *erkin*); moreover, it is fairly possible that the contrast between **duei-r-o-* and **duei-n-o* is really explained by an archaic opposition of active *r-* forms and passive *n-* forms (cf., Knobloch 1961). The only serious difficulty lies in the fact that neither *erkir* nor *erkin* have accurate parallels in other Indo-European languages.

Such a parallel for *erkir*, however, is found in Celtic. It is represented by a word for 'earth' attested in OWelsh *dair*, *dayr*, Welsh *daear*, Corn. *doar*, *doer*, *dor*, *dour*, Bret. *douar*. The inlaut vowel sequence may reflect an earlier *-*ija-* or *-*eja-* as in the Celtic word for 'winter': OIr. *gaim-red*, OWelsh *gaem*, Welsh *gaeaf*, OCorn. *goyf*, Bret. *goañv* < **gijamo-* or **gejamo-*. As far as the initial consonant is concerned it may reflect not only Celtic **d-* (< PIE **d*, **dh*) but also a cluster **dw-* (< PIE **du-*, **dhū-*), cf., OIr. *dau* 'two', OWelsh *dou*, Welsh *dau*, Corn. *dow*, Bret. *daou* etc. < PIE **duō*. In other words, a fairly possible reconstruction for the above word is Celtic **dwijaro-* or **dwejaro-* which is certainly quite close to the possible source of Arm. *erkir*.

Phonetically, Celtic **dwijaro-/*dwejaro-* is to Arm. *erkir* as Celtic **gijamo-/*gejamo-* is to Lith. *žiemà* (< **ǵheimā*). The position of Armenian at the periphery of Indo-European makes the situation with the word in question not unlike what we observe in the sphere of much more numerous Indo-Celtic parallels: two pieces of independent evidence seem to be enough to testify to the existence of a PIE word. That is why I suggest reconstructing an archaic Indo-European word for 'earth' as **d̥weir(o)-*.

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